



# NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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Testimony on H.B. 6321: An Act Concerning The Adoption And Implementation Of The  
Connecticut Parentage Act

Judiciary Committee

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Submitted By: Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW

The National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter representing over 2,300 members supports H.B. 6321. This bill effectively updates the state's parentage law to reflect the reality of families in 2021.

Children need the psychological security of knowing who their parent is for legal and emotional purposes. Parents need the security of knowing that they have full legal rights in regards to their children. Currently, that is not the case for children or parents when the family consists of same sex parents, parents that are unmarried, and non-biological parents. H.B. 6321 rectifies these problems by spelling out in statute who can establish legal parentage and how that can be accomplished.

Everyday issues are left unclear when there is not legal parentage of both parents to their child. From matters as simple as who may pick up a child from school to life threatening medical decisions (made even more critical by the pandemic), a parent who does not have parentage rights cannot enforce decisions regarding their own child. The non-parentage parent is treated as a non-entity under the current discriminatory law, which ignores what may be in the best interests of the child.

In the case of divorce or separation of parents the child may be denied the right to see a parent due to that parent not having legal parentage status. The bonded relationship between the non-parentage parent and the child is disrupted, causing mental harm to both the child and the parent. This is especially traumatic for a child and that trauma can have lifelong negative effects.

As social workers we recognize the diversity of families in Connecticut. The emotional ties that parents have to their children and vice versa is the bond that provides sustenance to families. Those ties are not dependent on the legal status of the parents. Non-biological parents are just as much a parent as is the biological parent. H.B. 6321 recognizes this fact and provides the means for non-biological parents to establish legal parentage rights.

Connecticut is the only state in New England that does not have a path for non-biological parents to secure parentage rights. It is time that our state joins all other New England states in assuring the best interests of children and their parents are secured by passage of this Parentage Act.